

## 2.0 ALTERNATIVES

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This chapter presents the alternatives being considered for implementation of the Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA RMP. It describes the No Action Alternative and one action alternative in detail and provides a summary comparison. For any recreation area improvements described in the alternatives, such as trails, formal campsites, and signage, Reclamation would allow these developments to occur if a managing partner were found. Also, cost-share conditions would need to be met, and Reclamation funds or other funding sources would have to be available. For comparison of the alternatives, it is assumed that all of the facilities would be built. Other actions, such as increased noxious weed control, do not require managing partners or cost-sharing agreements. Such actions may require memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with other agency partners, and are assumed to be implemented for the purpose of comparing and analyzing the alternatives.

### 2.1 Alternatives Development

NEPA requires Federal agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to a proposed Federal action that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action. The NEPA alternatives development process allows Reclamation to work with interested agencies, Tribes, the public, and other stakeholders to develop alternative management plans that respond to identified issues. This Final EA documents Reclamation's planning and decision-making process for the RMP.

Reclamation began the public involvement process for the Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA RMP in January 2002 by initiating public scoping. The purpose of this scoping process was to identify issues in the RMP Study Area that needed to be included in the RMP alternatives and addressed in the Draft EA. After the first public meeting, held in April 2002 in Emmett, Idaho, an Ad Hoc Work Group was formed to address issues and provide input to developing alternatives. The public involvement process is more fully described in Chapter 4, *Consultation and Coordination*. Reclamation developed the alternatives based on issues identified during the public involvement process, and refined the alternatives with assistance from the Ad Hoc Work Group. The Preferred Alternative was identified during this process for evaluation in the Draft EA and was modified as presented in this Final EA.

This process resulted in the development of one action alternative that prescribes a range of natural, cultural, and recreation resource management actions. The No Action Alternative, as required by NEPA, is also analyzed. Each alternative would result in different future conditions at the reservoir and WMA. The two alternatives are summarized below:

- **Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices.** If implemented, this alternative would mean continuing to manage Reclamation lands according to existing agreements and under current laws and regulations. Alternative A is not a “status quo” situation. Management of the reservoir and surrounding lands would be on an ad hoc basis, without benefit of a current management plan. Portions of a 1984

management plan for Montour WMA, where still relevant, would be used to provide direction for the WMA.

- **Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities.** This alternative emphasizes natural and cultural resource enhancement while maintaining current recreational opportunities. Some facility improvements are proposed.

## **2.1.1 Similarities Among Alternatives**

Although the alternatives differ in many ways, several features are common to both alternatives:

- Continue to operate and maintain Reclamation lands and facilities.
- Continue to adhere to existing and future Federal, State, and County laws and regulations.
- Implement existing restrictions on vehicle use of the shore and drawdown zone.
- Prior to any major ground-disturbing activities, conduct the appropriate level of site-specific NEPA analysis and public involvement. Required cultural resource surveys, archeological site evaluations, and necessary inventories for traditional cultural properties (TCPs) would also be completed.
- For recreation development and management aspects, follow the principles in Public Law 89-72, Federal Water Projects Recreation Act of 1965, as amended by Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. Basically, if a non-Federal public entity has agreed to manage recreation on Reclamation lands, Reclamation may share development costs for up to 50 percent of the total cost.
- Coordinate with law enforcement entities regarding Public Law 107-69, which authorizes Reclamation to enter agreements with State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to carry out law enforcement on Reclamation land.
- Coordinate with Tribes and appropriate agencies regarding cultural resources.
- Comply with current accessibility regulations and standards required at all new facilities and on retrofits of existing facilities.

All actions are dependent upon the availability of funding and must be within the authority of the applicable agency.

## **2.2 Alternatives Considered in Detail**

The two alternatives described above were selected for detailed analysis in the EA. Table 2.2-1 summarizes each alternative. The remainder of the chapter presents the alternative features as a narrative. The impacts of each alternative are described in Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences. During the public comment period, which opened with the release of the Draft EA on September 30, 2003, and ended on November 14, 2003, the Preferred Alternative was slightly refined, which is described in the FONSI.

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE AREA</b>		
<b>Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat</b>	Comply with Federal Endangered Species Act regarding all pertinent activities.	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically protect State species of special concern, including Conservation Data Center category S2 and S3 plants and plant communities</li> </ul>
<b>Wetland and Riparian Areas</b>	Protect wetland and riparian species.	Improve habitat quality by grazing management and/or exclusion of livestock in wetland and riparian areas.
<b>Noxious Weeds</b>	Develop and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan, including invasive aquatic species, mosquito control, and enhanced coordination efforts with Gem County Weed Control and CWMA. An IPM may include cultural, biological, mechanical, and chemical control methods.	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek additional funding by raising the level of priority.</li> </ul>
<b>Water Quality, Erosion and Sedimentation Control</b>	<p>Continue to provide adequate sanitation and waste management facilities at developed recreation sites (e.g., restrooms, trash containers, etc.) to protect water quality.</p> <p>Continue to manage use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on Reclamation lands, including those leased for agricultural purposes, in a manner that does not adversely affect water quality.</p> <p>Continue to prohibit motorized vehicular use on the shoreline (outside of boat ramps) and within the drawdown zone area of the reservoir.</p> <p>If invited by other agencies, Reclamation would participate in a watershed level group to reduce erosion.</p>	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Cultural Resources General</b>	Comply with Sections 106 and 110 of NHPA, ARPA, and NAGPRA. Use consultative processes defined in 36 CFR 800 to determine if sites are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (Register), assess Project effects, and identify preservation or mitigation actions. Use processes defined in 43 CFR 10 if human remains are discovered that are of Indian origin.	Same as Alternative A.

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE AREA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Identification &amp; Evaluation</b>	<p>Complete archeological surveys when ground disturbing actions are proposed in locations where no survey that meets today's professional standards has been previously performed. This determination will be made by a Reclamation archeologist. Complete test excavations or other site evaluation actions at archeological sites found in areas of new ground disturbance or at other recorded sites if they appear threatened by land use or Project operations.</p> <p>Complete tribal consultations as necessary to determine if traditional cultural properties (TCPs) are present in areas of new ground disturbing actions, or are in or near focused use areas. If TCP's are present, assess impacts on Register eligible TCPs from proposed new actions or from existing use.</p>	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Protection</b>	<p>Unless justified, develop no new features or implement no new ground-disturbing actions within the boundaries of a Register-eligible site or TCP. If a decision were made to proceed with a damaging action, design the facilities to avoid or minimize resource damage.</p> <p>Monitor Register-eligible or unevaluated sites or TCP's in or near focused use areas to allow early detection of damage, in the event such sites are recorded in the future.</p> <p>Implement management or mitigation actions to address identified adverse effects on Register-eligible sites or TCP's.</p> <p>In the event of discovery of human remains of Indian origin, complete protective actions, tribal notification, and consultation procedures as required by 43 CFR 10. Consult potentially affiliated tribes about procedures for protection, treatment, and disposition. Human remains would be left in place; unless it was determined they could not be protected from harm.</p> <p>In the event that future actions generate archeological collections, curate those collections using processes consistent with 36 CFR 79 and 411 DM, which define Federal requirements.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for interpretive materials and increase public awareness of Montour Valley (trails brochure etc.).</li> <li>• Designate Marsh/Ireton Ranch as historic district.</li> <li>• Allow for self-guided tours.</li> <li>• Retain Palmer House.</li> <li>• Designate old Montour Townsite and archaeological sites as historic district.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE AREA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Indian Sacred Sites</b>	Comply with EO 13007 for any new undertakings. Complete tribal consultations to determine if sacred sites are present in areas of new ground disturbing actions.  Seek to avoid adversely affecting sacred sites from new undertakings, and to accommodate Tribal access and use, when consistent with accomplishing agency mission and law.	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Indian Trust Assets</b>	Consult on actions that may affect ITAs and seek to avoid impacts.	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Scenic Values</b>	No specific measures currently in place.	Locate and design any new or renovated facilities, structures, roads, trails, and erosion control structures to be compatible and integrate with the open, rural environment of the reservoir and surrounding area.
<b>Public Safety</b> <b>Fire Protection Services</b>	Continue agreements for fire suppression activities on Reclamation lands with the BLM/Gem County Fire District and Gem County Fire Department.  Develop a Fire Management Plan.	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Safety and Enforcement Services</b>	Continue contracting and work with Gem County Sheriff's Department to ensure adequate level of law enforcement on Reclamation lands.  Continue contracting with County Sheriff Marine Patrol to adequately enforce no-wake boating and circular (clock-wise) designations within the area of the reservoir.  Continue enforcing no shooting safety zone around Montour campground and east side of old town site with area demarcated.	Same as Alternative A.

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE AREA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Public Information</b>	Continue to use Reclamation's sign manual to prepare and disseminate information to the public as needed.	<p>Use Reclamation's sign manual to prepare clear, consistent signage to guide public access to and use of Reclamation lands and park facilities.</p> <p>Develop and implement an interpretive program that illustrates the prehistoric, historic, and current land use practices, as well as natural features surrounding and visible from Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for wildlife observation and other natural resource-based interpretation and education at appropriate reservoir and WMA locations.</p> <p>Provide informative and concise public information materials on a continuing basis through local merchants, chambers of commerce, government offices, and other means (e.g., web page and link to IDFG web page.); and at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fee stations,</li> <li>• recreation areas, and</li> <li>• road-side pullouts and appropriate locations within the WMA.</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b>	<p>Continue Cooperative Agreement with Gem County Waterways to place seasonal day use docks adjacent to highway boat ramps and at locations throughout reservoir.</p> <p>Continue to actively seek non-Federal public entity managing partner(s) to operate all recreation facilities at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA.</p> <p>Contribute to an environment that supports viable concession services, with concession management to follow Reclamation's policy.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a formal agreement between Reclamation and Thunder Mountain Railroad for use of Reclamation lands at Montour WMA and Cobblestone Park, as needed.</li> <li>• Work with the County to implement an informal monitoring, assessment, and response program to deal with crowding and the potential for associated user conflicts on the reservoir from boating.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>/1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE AREA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Access</b>	Continue to allow access to Reclamation lands according to current policies, i.e., ORV use prohibited.	<p>Establish and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with ITD in coordinating and providing adequate signage at/to designated recreation areas and highway boat ramps to accommodate better visibility and safe ingress/egress at these locations, as well as other methods to increase highway safety and address access-related issues around the RMP Study Area.</p> <p>Work with the County to enforce no parking areas adjacent to recreation areas and highway boat ramps.</p> <p>Coordinate with ITD and the County Sheriff to install barriers to prevent roadside (ad hoc) parking where it is occurring.</p> <p>Cooperate with City of Emmett, Gem County, ITD, BLM, and Irrigation Districts to seek feasible non-motorized trail connections between surrounding community and the reservoir/WMA.</p> <p>*Provide for and maintain non-motorized trail opportunities at appropriate locations around Black Canyon Reservoir and within Montour WMA including better internal parking and WMA trail access.</p>
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO MONTOUR WMA</b>		
<b>WMA Boundary</b>	Stay within current WMA boundary Maintain clearly marked boundaries between Montour WMA and private property.	<p>Update Reclamation/IDFG MOU for management of Montour WMA.</p> <p>Maintain clearly marked boundaries between Montour WMA and private property.</p> <p>Expand WMA boundary on south side Reclamation lands down river to mouth of Squaw Creek (along opposite shore).</p>

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO MONTOUR WMA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Wetlands and Ponds</b>	<p>Continue to maintain natural and constructed wetlands and develop additional wetlands as funding/staff time are available, but without any overall plan.</p> <p>Obtain water rights following the state process, utilizing water for wetlands from natural seepage and/or agricultural wastewater.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a planned program for up to an additional 25 – 50 pond acres.</p> <p>Develop and implement a long-term pond maintenance plan for all ponds within the Montour WMA, including monitoring for/of: infiltration of Eurasian milfoil, water control structure operability, and water flow (to decrease stagnant water and help control mosquitoes).</p> <p>Based on field review of project sites, avoid sensitive wetland plants and communities.</p> <p>Obtain water rights following the state process, utilizing water for wetlands from natural seepage and/or agricultural wastewater.</p>
<b>Agricultural and Grazing Leases</b>	<p>Continue agricultural leases for habitat values as determined jointly by IDFG and Reclamation.</p> <p>Continue managed grazing.</p>	<p>Continue agricultural leases for habitat values as determined jointly by IDFG and Reclamation.</p> <p>Evaluate existing agricultural leases as they become due for a change in management practices (if necessary) to comply with WMA goals and objectives.</p> <p>Evaluate existing grazing leases as they become due for a change in management practices (if necessary) to comply with WMA goals and objectives.</p>
<b>Seasonal Wildlife Nesting Closures</b>	February 1—July 1; specific to signed areas.	February 1—July 31; specific to signed areas and consistent with other IDFG seasonal closures.
<b>WMA Refuge Hunting Closure Area</b>	Hunting permitted throughout WMA (except for no-shooting safety zone around campground and east side of old town site).	Same as Alternative A.
<b>Irrigation Ditches</b>	No specific actions to enhance or maintain ditches for wildlife values.	Coordinate with local ditch companies for the establishment and maintenance of wildlife and habitat values.
<b>Fire Management</b>	Undertake wildfire rehabilitation in keeping with wildlife habitat values and the intent of the WMA.	<p>Same as Alternative A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement prescribed burning for habitat manipulation followed by appropriate planting.</li> </ul>



**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
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Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO MONTOUR WMA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Production of Waterfowl and Upland Game Birds</b>	<p>Annually maintain waterfowl nesting and water control structures.</p> <p>Monitor and manage residual nesting cover so as to optimize the vigor, biodiversity, and density of vegetation.</p> <p>Maintain secure nesting habitat by restricting activities during the nesting season (Feb1—Jul 1).</p> <p>Enforce area closures to minimize disturbances to waterfowl and other birds.</p>	<p>Annually maintain waterfowl nesting structures.</p> <p>Monitor and manage additional residual nesting cover (50% of upland portions of WMA) so as to optimize the vigor, biodiversity, and density of vegetation.</p> <p>Maintain secure nesting habitat by restricting activities during the nesting season (Feb 1—Jul 31).</p> <p>Maintain and increase water control structures to stabilize water levels to prevent nest flooding.</p> <p>Use media to distribute information on importance of protecting nesting waterfowl and other birds during spring production.</p>
<b>Wild Pheasant Carrying Capacity</b>	<p>Continue to maintain tall grass/forb areas providing dense nesting cover during spring nesting season.</p> <p>Continue to plant food plots in irrigated areas.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Habitat Improvement Program to establish food source/nesting area.</li> <li>• Increase use of reservists and volunteers to establish and maintain these habitats.</li> <li>• Establish forbs in permanent cover for broods and adult birds.</li> <li>• Encourage heavy cattail thickets to provide thermal roosting cover.</li> </ul>
<b>Montour WMA Recreation &amp; Access</b>  <b>Non-consumptive Recreation (wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.)</b>	<p>Continue to allow non-consumptive recreational opportunities consistent with the purposes of the WMA.</p>	<p>Monitor and manage public use and access to ensure maintenance of wildlife and their habitats.</p> <p>Monitor consumptive and non-consumptive uses and implement strategies to alleviate conflicts, if necessary.</p> <p>Provide environmental education to groups (scout troops, school classes, bird watchers and sportsmen).</p> <p>Write newspaper articles and news releases, and conduct tours to promote Montour WMA and its wildlife and recreation values as opportunities arise.</p> <p>Develop self-guided wildlife tour for periods not conflicting with hunting or critical wildlife production.</p>

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO MONTOUR WMA (CONT.)</b>		
<b>Access</b>	Continue to allow public access except in nesting and brooding areas during seasonal nesting closure.	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop non-motorized boating access area (put-in and take-out site).</li> <li>• Provide for and actively enforce foot traffic use only off of designated roads.</li> <li>• Provide fewer, larger signed parking areas; i.e., less small, dispersed sites.</li> <li>• Install barriers as necessary to regulate motorized access</li> </ul>
<b>Montour Campground</b>	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Upgrade campsites to accommodate larger RVs, within the confines of the existing campground.
<b>Consumptive Recreation (hunting, fishing, trapping)</b>	Continue to allow hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities consistent with the purposes of the WMA.	Provide fishing opportunities during periods not conflicting with nesting or brooding waterfowl. Develop permanent cover for game birds. Develop ponds to provide additional waterfowl hunting sites (pond design will also enhance duck production and other wildlife). Monitor hunter activity related to upland game and waterfowl hunting and implement strategies to alleviate conflicts, if necessary. Adjust public use in response to wildlife management goals, sportsmen needs, and perceptions.
<b>Special Events</b>	Use Reclamation-wide application system when it becomes available to evaluate special events on a case-by-case basis through current application system consistent with intent of the WMA.	No special events allowed at Montour WMA that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives.
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO BLACK CANYON RESERVOIR</b>		
<b>Special Events</b>	Use Reclamation-wide application system, when it becomes available, to evaluate special events on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate Triangle Park as the main location on Reclamation lands to hold special events.</li> </ul>
<b>Cobblestone Park</b>	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Improve and expand facilities/area to accommodate additional recreational activities and demand (e.g., Disc Golf, group use area, better fishing access, camping, additional picnic sites). *Work with IDL on lease agreement for lands adjacent to river.

**Table 2.2-1. Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour WMA RMP  
Final EA Alternatives**

Area and Topic	Alternative A-No Action <sup>/1/</sup> : Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B-Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities
<b>TOPICS APPLICABLE TO BLACK CANYON RESERVOIR (CONT.)</b>		
Wild Rose Park	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Improve and add facilities to accommodate additional day use and group-related activities, and fishing access to the river.
Triangle Park	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Improve facilities at Triangle Park to better accommodate day use and group-related activities.
Black Canyon Park	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Design and build an accessible fishing pier at the easternmost portion of Black Canyon Park.  *Expand and/or reconfigure facilities to accommodate increased day use and group-related activities.
Highway “County” Boat Ramps	Continue use and access as currently allowed.	*Work with managing partner (Gem County) to provide facility improvements at the highway “County” boat ramps to better accommodate boating-related activities (e.g., signage, seasonal trash receptacles), including a non-motorized boating access area (take-out site) adjacent to Highway Ramp No. 3.  Coordinate with ITD to provide adequate signage designating recreation areas and highway boat ramps to accommodate better visibility and safe ingress/egress at these locations.

Notes:

\*Indicates the need for a public entity non-Federal public entity managing partner.

<sup>/1/</sup> Alternative A is the No Action Alternative as required under NEPA. In this case, if implemented, it would mean continuing to manage Reclamation lands according to existing agreements and under current laws and regulations. It is important to note that Alternative A is not necessarily a “status quo” situation. Rather, Alternative A would be a continuation of the existing Reclamation management of the reservoir and IDFG management of the WMA. For the Montour WMA, Alternative A is not simply a continuation of the 1984 Management Plan. Several elements of the plan were not implemented, nor would they be in the future, because of conflicts with wildlife management goals and the lack of a non-Federal public entity partner with whom to cost share. Relevant elements were carried forward in this EA.

Note: All new facilities would be designed in accordance with current standards for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

## **2.2.1 Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices**

Alternative A is the No Action Alternative, as required under NEPA. If implemented, it would mean continuing to manage Reclamation lands according to existing agreements and under current laws and regulations. It is important to note that Alternative A is not necessarily a “status quo” situation. Rather, Alternative A would be a continuation of the existing Reclamation management of the reservoir and IDFG management of the WMA. Management of the WMA, reservoir, and surrounding lands would be on an ad hoc basis, without benefit of a current management plan. Portions of a 1984 management plan for the Montour WMA, where still relevant, would be used to provide direction for the WMA. Some specific highlights of this alternative include the following:

- Protect wetland and riparian species.
- Continue contracting and work with Gem County Sheriff’s Department to ensure adequate level of law enforcement on Reclamation lands.
- Continue contracting with County Sheriff Marine Patrol to adequately enforce no wake boating and circular (clock-wise) use regulations within the area of the reservoir.
- Continue Cooperative Agreement with Gem County Waterways to place seasonal day use docks adjacent to highway boat ramps and at locations throughout reservoir.
- Continue to actively seek non-Federal public entity managing partner(s) to operate all recreation facilities at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA.
- Prepare and disseminate information to the public as needed.
- Stay within current WMA boundary (no expansion of WMA on other Reclamation lands).
- Continue to maintain natural and constructed wetlands and develop additional wetlands as funding/staff time are available, but without any overall plan.
- Allow hunting throughout WMA.
- Continue use and access in the WMA as currently allowed.
- Continue current grazing practices within the WMA.

Figure 2.2-1, Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices, shows the entire RMP Study Area and highlights key management actions under this alternative. Figure 2.2-2, Alternative A—No Action (Montour Wildlife Management Area), focuses on management actions within the WMA.

Insert Figure 2.2-1, Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

11 x 17 front

Insert Figure 2.2-1, Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

11 x 17 back

Insert Figure 2.2-2, Alternative A—No Action (Montour Wildlife Management Area)

11 x 17 front

Insert Figure 2.2-2, Alternative A—No Action (Montour Wildlife Management Area)

11 x 17 back



### **2.2.1.1 Topics Applicable to the Entire Area**

#### **Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat**

Under Alternative A, Reclamation would continue to comply with the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regarding all pertinent activities.

#### **Wetland and Riparian Areas**

Reclamation would continue to protect wetland and riparian species under the same management approach that is currently in place.

#### **Noxious Weeds**

Under Alternative A, Reclamation would develop and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan. This plan would include invasive aquatic species, mosquito control, and enhanced coordination efforts with Gem County Weed Control and the Upper Payette Coordinated Weed Management Area (CWMA). An IPM may include cultural, biological, mechanical, and chemical control methods.

#### **Water Quality, Erosion and Sedimentation Control**

To protect water quality, Reclamation would continue to provide adequate sanitation and waste management facilities at developed recreation sites, such as restrooms and trash containers. Chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on Reclamation lands, including those leased for agricultural purposes, would continue to be used in a manner that does not adversely affect water quality. Motorized vehicular use on the shoreline (outside of boat ramps) and within the drawdown zone area of the reservoir would continue to be prohibited.

#### **Cultural Resources**

##### ***General***

Reclamation would continue to comply with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). As defined in 36 CFR 800, Reclamation would use a consultative process to determine if sites are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), assess the effects of the management of the area, and identify preservation or mitigation actions. If human remains are discovered that are of Indian origin, Reclamation would apply the processes defined in 45 CFR 10.

##### ***Identification and Evaluation***

Reclamation would complete archeological surveys when ground disturbing actions are proposed in locations where no survey that meets today's professional standards has been previously performed. As with present management, this determination would be made by a Reclamation archeologist. Reclamation would complete test excavations or other site evaluation actions at archeological sites found in areas of new ground disturbance or at other recorded sites if they appear threatened by land use or Project operations. Reclamation would also complete tribal consultations as needed to determine if traditional cultural properties (TCPs) are present in areas of new ground disturbing actions, or are in or near focused use areas. If TCPs are present, Reclamation would assess impacts on Register-eligible TCPs from proposed new actions or from existing use.

### ***Protection***

Unless justified, Reclamation would develop no new features or implement no new ground-disturbing actions within the boundaries of a National Register-eligible site or TCP. If a decision were made to proceed with a damaging action, the facilities would be designed to avoid or minimize resource damage. Ongoing monitoring of National Register-eligible or unevaluated sites or TCPs in or near focused use areas would allow Reclamation to detect damage early, if such sites are recorded in the future.

Reclamation would implement management or mitigation actions to address identified adverse effects on National Register-eligible sites or TCPs. In the event of discovery of human remains of Indian origin, Reclamation would complete protective actions, Tribal notification, and consultation procedures as required by 45 CFR 10. Potentially affiliated tribes would be consulted about procedures for protection, treatment, and disposition. Human remains would be left in place unless it was determined they could not be protected from harm.

If future actions generate archeological collections, Reclamation would direct curation of those collections using processes consistent with 36 CFR 79 and 411 DM, which define Federal requirements.

### **Indian Sacred Sites**

Any new undertakings on Federal land would comply with Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites). This includes consultation with Tribes to determine if sacred sites are present in areas of new ground disturbing actions. In all cases, Reclamation would seek to avoid damages and maintain access from new undertakings on Federal lands, when consistent with accomplishing agency mission and law.

### **Indian Trust Assets**

Reclamation would consult on actions that may affect ITAs while seeking to avoid impacts.

### **Scenic Values**

No specific measures are currently in place for addressing scenic values.

### **Public Safety**

#### ***Fire Protection Services***

BLM is responsible for fire suppression on Reclamation lands. In turn, the BLM has agreements with Gem County Fire Protection District and Gem County Fire Department. These services would continue. Reclamation would also develop a Fire Management Plan.

#### ***Safety and Enforcement Services***

Reclamation would continue to contract and work with the Gem County Sheriff's Department to ensure an adequate level of law enforcement on Reclamation lands. The County Sheriff Marine Patrol would continue to be a partner in adequately enforcing no wake boating and circular (clock-wise) designation within the area of the reservoir. The no shooting safety zone around Montour campground and the signed area on the east side of the old town site would continue to be enforced.

## **Public Information**

Reclamation would inform the public of management decisions and issues as needed through standard media outlets.

## **Special Events**

When it becomes available, the Reclamation-wide application system would be used to continue to permit special events at reservoir parks. The existing application system would be used until the new system is implemented.

## **Recreation**

Reclamation would continue their Cooperative Agreement with Gem County Waterways to place seasonal day use docks adjacent to highway boat ramps and at locations throughout the reservoir. Also, Reclamation would continue to actively seek non-Federal public entity managing partner(s) to operate all recreation facilities at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA. As part of this effort, Reclamation intends to contribute to an environment that supports viable concession services, with concession management to follow Reclamation's policy.

## **Access**

Access to Reclamation lands would be allowed according to current policies and regulations. These regulations prohibit off-road vehicle (ORV) use on all Reclamation land unless specifically opened. Also, the safety and security of the dam and the area surrounding the dam has priority over public access to this area. For safety and security reasons, this area will remain closed to public access.

### **2.2.1.2 Topics Applicable to Montour WMA**

#### **WMA Boundary**

The current WMA boundaries would remain as they are, and the WMA would not be extended to adjacent Reclamation lands. Clearly marked boundaries between the Montour WMA and private property would be maintained.

#### **Wetlands and Ponds**

Natural and constructed wetlands would continue to be maintained. Additional wetlands would be constructed as funding and staff time are available, but without any overall plan.

#### **Agricultural and Grazing Leases**

Agricultural leases and managed grazing would be continued where these activities contribute to habitat values.

#### **Seasonal Wildlife Nesting Closures**

The seasonal nesting closure would extend from February 1 to July 1. This closure would apply to specific, signed areas. The seasonal nesting closure prohibits all access and activities, including hiking, fishing, and bird watching.

#### **WMA Refuge Hunting Closure Area**

Hunting would continue to be allowed throughout WMA, except for no-shooting safety zone around campground.

### **Irrigation Ditches**

No specific actions would be undertaken to enhance or maintain irrigation ditches for wildlife or habitat values.

### **Fire Management**

Recently burned areas would be rehabilitated in keeping with wildlife habitat values and the intent of the WMA.

### **Production of Waterfowl and Upland Game Birds**

Waterfowl nesting structures would be maintained annually. Reclamation would also monitor and manage residual nesting cover to optimize vegetation vigor, biodiversity, and density. A secure nesting habitat would be maintained through the seasonal restriction, and area closures would be enforced to minimize disturbances to waterfowl and other birds.

### **Wild Pheasant Carrying Capacity**

The tall grass/forb areas would be maintained to provide dense nesting cover for wild pheasants during the spring nesting season. Food plots, with an emphasis on perennial plants, would continue to be planted in irrigated areas.

### **Montour WMA Recreation and Access**

#### ***Non-consumptive Recreation (wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.)***

Non-consumptive recreational opportunities would continue to be allowed at current levels consistent with the purposes of the WMA.

#### ***Access***

Public access would continue to be allowed as currently, except in nesting and brooding areas.

#### ***Montour Campground***

Under Alternative A, use and access to the campground would continue as currently allowed.

#### ***Consumptive Recreation (hunting, fishing, trapping)***

Hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities would continue at current levels consistent with the purposes of the WMA.

### **Special Events**

When it becomes available, the Reclamation-wide application system would be used to continue to permit special events at reservoir parks. The existing application system would be used until the new system is implemented. Any special events that are proposed must be consistent with intent of the WMA.

#### **2.2.1.3 Topics Applicable to Black Canyon Reservoir**

Use and access would continue as currently allowed in the following areas:

- Cobblestone Park
- Wild Rose Park

- Triangle Park
- Black Canyon Park
- Highway “County” Boat Ramps

### **2.2.2 Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities**

This alternative emphasizes natural and cultural resource enhancement while maintaining current recreational opportunities. Some facility improvements are proposed, but recreation facility expansion or significant improvements would only be undertaken if Reclamation entered into an agreement with a non-Federal (public entity) managing partner. Some specific highlights of this alternative include the following:

- Improve habitat quality by eliminating grazing in wetland and riparian areas.
- Work with the County to implement an informal monitoring, assessment, and response program to deal with crowding and the potential for associated user conflicts on the reservoir from boating.
- Expand the WMA boundary on the south side Reclamation lands down river to the mouth of Squaw Creek (along opposite shore).
- Develop and implement a planned program for up to an additional 25 to 50 pond acres within the WMA, and develop and implement a long-term pond maintenance plan for all ponds within the Montour WMA.
- Continue agricultural leases within the WMA for habitat values as determined by IDFG; and evaluate existing agricultural leases as they become due for a change in management practices (if necessary) to comply with WMA goals and objectives.
- Allow no special events in the WMA that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives, but continue to allow at reservoir parks (particularly at Triangle Park).

Figure 2.2-3, *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities*, shows the entire RMP Study Area and highlights key management actions under this alternative. Figure 2.2-4, *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Status and Use*, focuses on land management actions within the WMA. Figure 2.2-5, *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Cover and Wetlands*, shows the locations of existing and potential new wetlands, as well as major habitat areas, within the WMA.

#### **2.2.2.1 Topics Applicable to the Entire Area**

##### **Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat**

In addition to complying with the ESA, as outlined in Alternative A, Reclamation would specifically protect State species of special concern. Such species would include Conservation Data Center (CDC) category S2 and S3 plants and plant communities. These sensitive plants are listed in Chapter 3, *Vegetation*.

### **Wetland and Riparian Areas**

Reclamation would focus on protecting and enhancing wetland and riparian habitat quality by active grazing management or exclusion of livestock in wetland and riparian areas.

### **Noxious Weeds**

As with Alternative A, Alternative B would call for the development of an IPM Plan. As a further step, Reclamation would seek additional funding by raising the level of priority for plan implementation under Alternative B.

### **Water Quality, Erosion and Sedimentation Control**

In addition to the facility maintenance and motorized vehicle prohibition items intended to protect water quality under Alternative A, Reclamation would establish best management practices (BMPs) for surrounding lands where offsite activities may affect Reclamation lands and Black Canyon Reservoir. This activity would be conducted in cooperation with adjacent private landowners and the applicable agencies, such as IDFG, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the BLM, and Gem County.

Reclamation would also implement a cooperative effort to develop an effective erosion control program, including standards, guidelines, and BMPs. This erosion control program would apply to all construction, operations, and maintenance programs on Reclamation lands, while considering program effects on other resources, such as natural, scenic, and cultural values. Other erosion control measures include enforcing appropriate restrictions in shoreline areas, and protecting reservoir shoreline and tributary riparian vegetation.

### **Cultural Resources**

#### ***General***

Management would be the same as Alternative A for the general approach to cultural resources.

#### ***Identification & Evaluation***

Management would be the same as Alternative A for the identification and evaluation of cultural resources.

#### ***Protection***

In addition to the management prescribed under Alternative A, Reclamation would allow for interpretive materials to be developed. The intent of such materials would be to increase public awareness of Montour Valley history, and provide public education about the importance of protecting these resources. Specific actions could include interpretation or signage at the Marsh/Ireton Ranch, brochures for self-guided tours, designation of the old town site as a historic district, and retaining the Palmer House.

### **Indian Sacred Sites**

Management would be the same as described for Alternative A.

### **Indian Trust Assets**

Management would be the same as described for Alternative A.

Figure 2.2-3, *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural*

Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities

11 x 17 front

Figure 2.2-3, *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Values and Maintenance of Recreation Opportunities*

11 x 17 back



Figure 2.2-4, Alternative B— Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Status and Use

11 x 17 front

Figure 2.2-4, Alternative B— Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Status and Use

11 x 17 back

Figure 2.2-5, Alternative B— Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Cover and Wetlands

11 x 17 front

Figure 2.2-5, Alternative B— Preferred Alternative (Montour Wildlife Management Area) Land Cover and Wetlands

11 x 17 back

## **Scenic Values**

To enhance scenic values, any new or renovated facilities, structures, roads, trails, and erosion control structures would be located and designed to be compatible and integrate with the open, rural environment of the reservoir and surrounding area. These facilities and structures would be required to comply with applicable design standards, guidelines, and BMPs.

## **Public Safety**

### **Fire Protection Services**

Fire protection services on Reclamation lands would continue to be provided by BLM and a Fire Management Plan would be developed, as described for Alternative A.

### **Safety and Enforcement Services**

Safety and enforcement service would be the same as described for Alternative A.

## **Public Information**

Using Reclamation's sign manual as appropriate, clear, consistent signage would be built to guide public access to and use of Reclamation lands and park facilities. Also, informative and concise public information materials would be provided on a continuing basis through local merchants, chambers of commerce, government offices, the Reclamation and IDFG web sites, fee stations, recreation areas, and road-side pullouts. The information could include such topics as habitat protection, Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA facilities and attractions, and interpretive information. Materials would also be developed to describe and show the purpose, function, and boundary of the Reclamation Zone. The materials would also explain why the safety and security of the dam and area surrounding the dam (i.e. the Reclamation Zone) has priority over public access to this area. The method of distribution would depend on the target users of the informational materials (see Figure 2.2-3).

As part of this public information program, Reclamation and cooperating agencies or groups would develop and implement an interpretive program that illustrates the prehistoric, historic, and current land use practices, as well as the natural features surrounding and visible from Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA. The intent of the interpretive program would be to provide opportunities for wildlife observation and other natural resource-based interpretation and education at appropriate reservoir and WMA locations.

## **Special Events**

Special events would be managed as described for Alternative A, plus Triangle Park would be designated as the main location on Reclamation lands to hold special events.

## **Recreation**

Recreation management actions would be the same as Alternative A. In addition, under Alternative B, a formal agreement may be established between Reclamation and the Thunder Mountain Railroad for use of Reclamation lands at Montour WMA and Cobblestone Park, as needed. Reclamation, with the County, would also implement an informal monitoring, assessment, and response program to address crowding and the potential for associated user conflicts on the reservoir from boating.

## **Access**

It is Reclamation's intent to provide adequate vehicular access to and parking at all designated recreation areas along the Black Canyon Reservoir and within Montour WMA. However, such access and parking should be sized in a manner that respects the physical constraints and safe use of these areas. Natural and cultural resource protection should also be a factor influencing how many people could access the site and have a positive recreation experience. Access and parking within the WMA would be formalized by signing approved parking areas and open roads, and eliminating other roads and ad hoc parking areas.

At the reservoir, Reclamation would establish and implement an MOU with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to coordinate and provide adequate signage for designated recreation areas and highway boat ramps. This approach would accommodate better visibility and safe use of these locations. Other methods to increase highway safety and address access-related issues around the RMP Study Area would also be considered. For example, Reclamation would coordinate with ITD and the County Sheriff to install barriers where unmanaged roadside parking is occurring and posing a safety hazard. Reclamation would work with the County to enforce no parking areas adjacent to recreation areas and highway boat ramps.

Reclamation also intends to improve non-motorized access to the reservoir and WMA through cooperation with the City of Emmett, Gem County, ITD, BLM, and the irrigation districts. One goal would be to seek feasible, non-motorized trail connections between the surrounding community and the recreation and wildlife management areas. Another goal would be to seek hiking and bicycling opportunities at appropriate locations around Black Canyon Reservoir and within Montour WMA to improve internal park and WMA trail access. This action would require a non-Federal, public entity, managing partner to share costs.

### **2.2.2.2 Topics Applicable to Montour WMA**

#### **WMA Boundary**

The WMA boundary would be expanded on the south side of the Reclamation lands down river to mouth of Squaw Creek (along the opposite shore). The boundaries between the Montour WMA and private property would be maintained and clearly marked. According to the boundary change and other management changes, the MOU between Reclamation and IDFG would be updated for the future management of the Montour WMA.

#### **Wetlands and Ponds**

In cooperation with IDFG, Reclamation would develop and implement a planned program for up to 25 to 50 additional pond acres. Along with development of these ponds, Reclamation would implement a long-term pond maintenance plan for all ponds within the Montour WMA. This maintenance plan would include monitoring for infiltration of Eurasian milfoil, as well as managing the water control structure operability and water flow to decrease stagnant water and help control mosquitoes.

Based on a field review, all activities in the WMA would be conducted to avoid sensitive wetland plants and communities. Reclamation will also explore the possibility of using natural seepage or agricultural wastewater as a water source for wetlands. All appropriate state water right permits would be obtained.

### **Agricultural and Grazing Leases**

As agricultural and grazing leases become eligible for renewal, Reclamation and IDFG would jointly evaluate the leases to determine if a change in management practices would be needed to comply with WMA goals and objectives. Agricultural leases that benefit habitat values would be continued.

### **Seasonal Wildlife Nesting Closures**

The seasonal nesting closure would be extended by 30 days under Alternative B. The closure would be enforced from February 1 to July 31 in signed areas. This would make the WMA consistent with other IDFG WMA seasonal closures.

### **WMA Refuge Hunting Closure Area**

As with Alternative A, hunting would be allowed throughout the WMA except for the no-shooting zone around Montour Campground and east of the old town site.

### **Irrigation Ditches**

Reclamation would coordinate with local ditch companies to establish and maintain wildlife and habitat values in these areas.

### **Fire Management**

Fire management would continue as described in Alternative A, plus Reclamation would implement prescribed burning for habitat manipulation, followed by appropriate planting.

### **Production of Waterfowl and Upland Game Birds**

Reclamation would support IDFG's efforts to optimize production of waterfowl and upland game birds in the Montour WMA. Specific actions include all of those listed under Alternative A, plus the following:

- Develop additional ponds according to established priorities and rare species and community protection, as funding becomes available. Ensure that appropriate measures are instituted at any new ponds to control mosquitoes, aquatic weeds, and other pests, as will be described in the IPM Plan.
- Maintain and increase water control structures to stabilize water levels to prevent nest flooding.
- Distribute information through media outlets on the importance of protecting nesting waterfowl during the spring production period.

### **Wild Pheasant Carrying Capacity**

Reclamation would support IDFG's efforts to increase wild pheasant carrying capacity by implementing the management actions described in Alternative A, plus the following actions:

- Use the Habitat Improvement Program to establish pheasant food sources and nesting areas.
- Increase the use of reservists and volunteers to establish and maintain these habitats.
- Establish forbs in permanent cover for broods and adult birds.
- Encourage heavy cattail thickets to provide thermal roosting cover.

## **Montour WMA Recreation & Access**

### ***Non-consumptive Recreation (wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.)***

Reclamation, in coordination with IDFG, would monitor and manage public use and access to ensure maintenance of wildlife and their habitats. This includes monitoring both consumptive and non-consumptive uses and implementing strategies to alleviate conflicts, if necessary.

To encourage non-consumptive uses, Reclamation and IDFG would provide environmental education to groups such as scout troops, school classes, bird watchers, and sportsmen. In addition, both agencies would write newspaper articles and news releases, and conduct tours to promote Montour WMA and its wildlife and recreation values as opportunities arise. A self-guided wildlife tour would be developed for periods not conflicting with hunting or critical wildlife production and seasonal closures. Foot traffic recreation would be allowed on trails and designated roads. No vehicles would be allowed off of designated roads. Reclamation would develop a public outreach web page about non-consumptive recreation at the Montour WMA, and include a link to the IDFG page.

Other entities, such as the Audubon Society, would be allowed to organize and conduct pertinent wildlife dependent recreation at Montour WMA in conjunction and coordination with IDFG and Reclamation.

### **Access**

Access to the Montour WMA would be the same as described for Alternative A, plus these additional management actions:

- Develop a self-guided wildlife tour for periods not conflicting with hunting or seasonal closures.
- Develop non-motorized boating access area (put-in and take-out site).
- Provide for and actively enforce foot traffic recreation only off of designated roads.
- Install barriers as necessary to regulate motorized access.
- Sign open and closed roads.
- Provide fewer, larger signed parking areas. This approach minimizes small, dispersed sites that ultimately disturb more habitat than focused parking areas.

### ***Montour Campground***

The Montour Campground would be upgraded to accommodate larger RVs, within the confines of the existing campground.

### ***Consumptive Recreation (hunting, fishing, trapping)***

Reclamation would support IDFG's efforts to determine sportsman needs and user satisfaction threshold levels at Montour WMA. The agency partners would seek to adjust public use in response to wildlife management goals, sportsmen needs, and perceptions.

### **Special Events**

No special events would be allowed at the Montour WMA that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives. Special events would continue to be allowed at the reservoir parks, particularly Triangle Park.



### **2.2.2.3 Topics Applicable to Black Canyon Reservoir**

All improvements to the Black Canyon Reservoir recreation area require a non-Federal, public entity cost-share partner for implementation. All new facilities would be designed in accordance with current standards for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

#### **Cobblestone Park**

The facilities and area would be improved and expanded to accommodate additional recreational activities and demand. Examples of improvements could include a disc golf course, a group use area, better fishing access, camping, additional picnic sites, and an upgraded restroom. Reclamation would enter into a lease agreement with Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to expand the recreation area around Cobblestone Park.

#### **Wild Rose Park**

The facilities would be improved and expanded to accommodate additional day use and group-related activities, as well as fishing access to the river.

#### **Triangle Park**

Because the management emphasis at Triangle Park would change to groups and special events, Reclamation would focus on improving the facilities to better accommodate day use and group-related activities.

#### **Black Canyon Park**

An accessible fishing pier at the easternmost portion of Black Canyon Park would be designed and built. Also, facilities would be expanded or reconfigured to accommodate increased day use and group-related activities, since the Montour WMA would no longer be available for such uses.

#### **Highway “County” Boat Ramps**

Reclamation would contract with Gem County (as a managing partner) to provide facility improvements at the highway “County” boat ramps. The intent would be to better accommodate boating-related activities such as signage and seasonal trash receptacles. This would include a non-motorized boating access area (take-out site) adjacent to Highway Ramp No. 3. Reclamation would also coordinate with ITD to provide adequate signage at designated recreation areas and highway boat ramps to accommodate better visibility and safety at these locations.

## **2.3 Alternatives Elements Eliminated from Consideration**

Most of the elements suggested by the public were included in one or more of the action alternatives. Some elements that were suggested included allowing for a trail around the reservoir, designating a “wildlife refuge area” within the WMA that would be a no shooting area, and expanding parking for Black Canyon Park by developing an overflow parking area on the north side of Highway 52 across from the park. These elements were reviewed, discussed, and analyzed among the Ad Hoc Work Group members and the Reclamation RMP Team members but were eliminated from further consideration because of potential costs, high potential for conflict with natural resources, conflicts between users, and standard Reclamation policies.

## **2.4 Summary of Impacts**

The impact analysis is presented in Chapter 3. A summary of these impacts is provided in Table 2.4-1.

TABLE 2.4-1  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Water Quality and Contaminants	Increases in recreation as a result of increases in population are expected to result in more motorized boats and PWC on the reservoir. This is expected to result in increased shoreline erosion and more oil and gasoline spills and bypassed unburned fuel.	<p>The impact of regional population growth on water quality because of increased use of motorized boats and PWC would be the same as Alternative A.</p> <p>Specific actions in Alternative B that would benefit water quality include improved grazing management and exclusion of livestock from wetland and riparian areas, and implementing an effective erosion control program in all construction, operations, and maintenance programs.</p> <p>At Montour WMA, using water for wetlands from natural seepage or agricultural wastewater may benefit water quality.</p> <p>Improvements or expanded facilities at recreation areas would increase the amount of impermeable surfaces, which increases stormwater runoff from parking areas into the reservoir. Implementation of stormwater management designs and construction and operation of BMPs would reduce this adverse effect, but would not eliminate it completely.</p>

TABLE 2.4-1  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Vegetation	<p>Development and implementation of an IPM Plan would be expected to result in improved management and control efforts directed toward noxious and invasive terrestrial and aquatic weeds compared to current efforts. The speed and magnitude of improvements will depend upon funding levels.</p> <p>A proposed Reclamation-wide application system for special events could possibly be used as a tool to avoid some impacts to some areas from vegetation damage resulting from high impact human use. Continued use of the WMA for special events would result in vegetation trampling and possibly introduction and spread of noxious weeds.</p> <p>As funds become available, additional wetlands and ponds would be developed and their location would affect the type of impact expected. Ponds constructed in areas that are currently degraded would be expected to have a positive impact as the area is revegetated accordingly. Wetlands developed in areas that currently have high quality native upland or wetland vegetation or populations of sensitive species would have detrimental impacts.</p> <p>Livestock grazing at Montour WMA is expected to occur at the current rate under this alternative. Although the level of grazing impacts has been reduced in the last few years, some ongoing impact to riparian vegetation would continue. Livestock grazing pressure, when coupled with the expected increases in human activity, would likely cause further declines in native forb and grass species and may exacerbate the spread of weeds within the WMA.</p>	<p>Potential additional funding and higher priority of the IPM Plan would result in a positive vegetation management. This would have positive benefits for the RMP Study Area by controlling the spread of weeds and by restoring low value weed-infested areas back to higher value vegetation, which helps to control re-infestation with weeds and benefits wildlife and the watershed.</p> <p>Additions to Black Canyon and Cobblestone parks would likely include removing riparian and exotic and native upland vegetation now found on those sites, which would have detrimental impacts to vegetation resources, depending on the species present. By undertaking protective measures during construction and use, the negative impacts would be reduced.</p> <p>Eliminating special events at Montour WMA that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives would reduce damage to vegetation within the WMA from trampling and camping and would reduce the potential for weed introduction and spread caused by these activities.</p> <p>Pond and wetland development would avoid sensitive plants species and wetland communities. All ponds within the Montour WMA would be monitored and maintained so that invasive plants, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, are more likely to be controlled. Wetland development would be of more positive benefit to vegetation under this alternative than under Alternative A. If carefully implemented and monitored, grazing management changes that are consistent with WMA goals are likely to benefit native vegetation, especially wet meadows and riparian areas.</p>

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

<b>Resource Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices</b>	<b>Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities</b>
Wildlife	<p>Alternative A is expected to be mostly neutral or positive for wildlife. Recent reductions in livestock grazing that would continue under this alternative could potentially benefit several sensitive species and other wildlife because of improved riparian habitat quality. Several species of sensitive bats forage over water and may benefit from higher insect productivity in created wetlands. Conversion of seasonally moist wet meadow communities to emergent wetland/open water ponds could eliminate foraging areas used by long-billed curlews and possibly spotted frogs. Mitigation measures would avoid potential impacts on sensitive species resulting from conversion of wet meadow to emergent wetland/open water pond habitat.</p> <p>Continued use of the Montour WMA for special events that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives would be detrimental for wildlife and habitat.</p>	<p>The potential adverse effects of implementation of Alternative B are expected to be either the same or less than those described for Alternative A. Effects from livestock grazing and agricultural leases would be lower because these leases would be reviewed as they expire to assure that potential impacts on sensitive species and their habitats are avoided, and that the leases are consistent with the goals of the WMA, resulting in potentially better habitat conditions. Better residual cover in wet meadows, resulting from reduced grazing levels, would benefit long-billed curlews and, if present, spotted frogs. However, even relatively light levels of livestock grazing in wet meadow areas could adversely affect curlews and spotted frogs because of vegetation removal and trampling and water quality degradation. Potential beneficial and adverse impacts of wetland development would be the same as Alternative A, including mitigation measures. Potential additional funding and a higher priority for implementation of an IPM Plan, compared to Alternative A, has the potential of benefiting several sensitive species by reversing current and avoiding future habitat degradation that results from weed infestations. Moving special events that are incompatible with wildlife management goals and objectives to a developed recreation site like Triangle Park, would avoid potential impacts to sensitive and other wildlife species because these species are more likely to occur at the WMA.</p>

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Aquatic Resources	<p>Alternative A would not be expected to substantially alter the composition or abundance of fish species present in the RMP Study Area compared to existing conditions. Expected increases in RMP Study Area use may result in some reservoir shoreline and near-shore habitat degradation from greater numbers of people and boats. This could impact warm water game species typically associated with shallow habitats through increased turbidity levels and perhaps the presence of higher concentrations of oil and gas during periods of heavy reservoir use by the public using motor boats and PWC. This may result in slightly reduced spawning and feeding success by these species. Increased use of the RMP Study Area also may result in increased angler harvest of game fish in the reservoir, river, and stocked Montour WMA ponds. However, these effects would be anticipated under any management scenario because of projected regional population increases and associated recreation needs and would not be limited only to Alternative A.</p>	<p>Alternative B also would not be expected to substantially alter the composition of fish species present in the RMP Study Area compared to existing conditions, but it may result in increased fish abundance. Impacts on fisheries habitat and fish resulting from increased public use and angler harvest associated with regional population growth would be the same as described for Alternative A. However, actions that would be implemented under Alternative B whose effects would result in improved riparian habitat, increased shoreline stability, reduced shoreline erosion and sediment delivery, and reduced water turbidity may offset these effects by contributing to improved fisheries habitat and perhaps increased fish abundance. Development of additional acres of ponds and pond maintenance would provide increased numbers of stocked fish for anglers to harvest in the Montour WMA. In addition, angler access to the Payette River below Black Canyon Dam and to the reservoir would be improved under Alternative B.</p>
Threatened and Endangered Species	<p>Threatened and endangered species that could be present in the vicinity of the RMP Study Area include the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, gray wolf, bald eagle, and bull trout. Conservation measures for Ute ladies'-tresses orchids include identifying areas of potential habitat that overlap with planned project facilities and new wetlands. In areas of potential habitat, Reclamation would either change the location of the facility to avoid direct and indirect impacts, including surface disturbance and hydrologic changes, or not construct the facility or trail. All potential impacts to Ute ladies'-tresses habitat would be avoided. No formal conservation measures are proposed for either the bald eagle or gray wolf because RMP actions are not expected to have any adverse effects on these species. No formal conservation measures are proposed for bull trout for Alternative A because the actions under this alternative are anticipated to have no adverse effects on bull trout or bull trout proposed critical habitat in or near the RMP Study Area.</p>	<p>Conservation measures would be the same as Alternative A, with the same level of expected impacts for Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, gray wolf, and bald eagle. For bull trout, possible minor benefits to proposed critical habitat near the mouth of Squaw Creek may result from actions directed at protecting and enhancing riparian habitat quality along the reservoir shoreline through active grazing management.</p> <p>Reclamation has determined that the Preferred Alternative may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the bull trout, Ute ladies' tresses, orchid, bald eagle, and gray wolf and will not result in any adverse effects on proposed bull trout critical habitat in Squaw Creek.</p>

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Recreation and Access	<p>Implementation of Alternative A would be without the benefit of a management plan resulting in generally negligible impacts to recreation resources in the near future. However, as the natural and recreation resources experience pressure and degradation from increased use over time because of population growth (35 to 39 percent), the impact of no management plan would likely result in some adverse impacts to recreation resources. While there is concern that reservoir surface capacity is at or exceeding acceptable levels from a safety standpoint, actions under Alternative A would not likely cause any significant increase in boating or PWC use on the reservoir.</p> <p>Specific proposals in Alternative A related to riparian areas, noxious weeds, and water quality and erosion would have an indirect beneficial impact on recreation by improving habitat for wildlife species and thus improving opportunities for consumptive and non-consumptive recreational activities. Specific proposals in Alternative A related to public safety would have a minor beneficial impact on recreation as they allow for the safe use of land and water for multiple activities. Allowing special events to take place as they currently do could potentially have a minor adverse impact to recreation if the special event results in crowding and/or conflicts with the general public.</p> <p>Alternative A proposes that use of and access to the campground in Montour WMA, the four parks on the reservoir, and highway County boat ramps continues as is currently allowed. This could potentially have an adverse effect on the recreation experience at and adjacent to these sites. If the demand for recreation resources continues to grow as expected, and the existing facilities are not improved or expanded, these sites could experience the effects of overcrowding resulting in decreased visitor safety and enjoyment.</p>	<p>Alternative B contains several actions that would maintain current recreational opportunities and provide minimal increased recreation facility capacity. Recreation-related actions under Alternative B would have beneficial effects on recreation.</p> <p>Overall wildlife and vegetation management would have an indirect beneficial impact on recreation by improving habitat for wildlife species and thus improving opportunities for consumptive and non-consumptive recreational activities.</p> <p>Implementation of a recreation use monitoring program would have a beneficial impact to recreation by assessing recreation carrying capacity so that land management activities can respond to changing demands over time.</p> <p>Actions related to access under Alternative B would have a beneficial impact to recreation by encouraging users through management strategies to use appropriate lands, particularly at and adjacent to the “County” boat ramps. Such strategies would enhance the recreation experience by reducing safety hazards and improving traffic circulation. Other access-related actions, such as providing non-motorized trail connections, would have beneficial impacts on recreation by providing an additional formalized recreation opportunity.</p> <p>Alternative B proposes a number of actions related to consumptive recreation (hunting, fishing, and trapping) at Montour WMA. These management/administrative actions would beneficially affect recreation facilities and opportunities at Montour WMA.</p> <p>The impact of regional population growth on recreation resources discussed under Alternative A would be less evident under Alternative B given that actions to provide additional recreation facility capacity and to enhance recreation user experience and satisfaction are proposed. A managing partner is needed in order to develop recreation facilities beyond minimum facilities for public health and safety.</p>

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	<b>Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices</b>	<b>Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities</b>
Land Use	<p>Increased use of the RMP Study Area over time would result in an adverse impact to land use because of the lack of a current management plan to provide long-term comprehensive guidance and direction on land uses.</p> <p>Specific proposals in Alternative A related to public safety would have a minor beneficial impact on land use as it allows for the safe use of land and water for multiple activities. Public information proposals would also have a minor beneficial impact to land use by improving the visitor's knowledge of current land use and how their activities are potentially detrimental to or supportive of resources on that land.</p> <p>Allowing special events to take place as they currently do could potentially have a minor adverse impact to land use if the special event has a detrimental effect on the natural, cultural, or recreation resources of that area. If overuse, crowding, or inadequate facilities occur at sites hosting special events, dispersed use could potentially result and have an adverse effect on land use.</p> <p>Identifying a managing partner for recreation facilities at the reservoir, as proposed in both alternatives, would have a minor beneficial impact to land use if management could be provided that is consistent with Reclamation's goals and objectives for the protection of both natural and recreation resources at the reservoir.</p>	<p>The proposals that were previously discussed under Alternative A, and which would have a negligible or beneficial impact on land use, are also part of Alternative B. For Alternative B however, there are additional proposals that go beyond each of the proposals in Alternative A in order to protect natural, cultural, and recreation resources at the reservoir.</p> <p>Cooperation among Reclamation, other applicable agencies, and adjacent private landowners for the establishment of BMPs for offsite (non-Reclamation land) activities would result in minor potential beneficial impacts to land use by avoiding indirect impacts to land use such as erosion, sedimentation, and decreased water quality. However, it is unlikely that other applicable agencies and adjacent private landowners would participate in this process unless incentives could be identified for them to establish BMPs related to activities on land they manage or own. If these incentives can not be identified, it is likely that no BMPs will be established for non-Reclamation lands resulting in no impacts to land use relative to the current situation.</p> <p>Expansion of the Montour WMA boundary would have a beneficial impact on land use by placing additional land under management of the IDFG for protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat and for provision of a variety of recreational experiences compatible with the goals of the WMA.</p> <p>Alternative B proposes improvement and enhancement of all recreation facilities at the reservoir and places an emphasis on day use and group use areas at several of the parks. This would have an adverse effect on land use only if the improvement and expansion of these facilities could not meet the growing demand for recreation facilities, which is unlikely, resulting in dispersed use around the reservoir. The fact that the proposed expansion would only occur at existing sites would be a minor beneficial impact to land use by concentrating this particular use to land on which it is already occurring.</p>

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Socioeconomics	<p>In general, impacts to socioeconomics would be negligible under Alternative A. However, if projected population growth and corresponding recreation use is realized, it could have a minor beneficial impact to the local community, particularly for the town of Emmett, and to a lesser degree to other parts of Gem County due to increased expenditures by visitors passing through Emmett.</p> <p>Cultural and natural resource proposals in Alternative A may create minor, short-term employment opportunities that could result in a negligible beneficial impact to the local economy. Development and implementation of an IPM Plan, protection of riparian areas, and compliance with cultural resource regulations are examples of these types of proposals. These programs propose some degree of maintenance, protection, or enhancement of natural or cultural resources that may require particular services potentially resulting in minor income generated within the local economy.</p>	<p>Impacts to socioeconomics would be minor under Alternative B. The implementation of proposals identified in Alternative B may provide some minor additional employment opportunities in the local community by potentially increasing park staff and outside support service needs. The degree of proposed improvements for existing cultural, natural, and recreation resources and for the provision for public safety is greater in Alternative B than in Alternative A. Thus overall, Alternative B would likely provide a slightly greater beneficial impact on the local economy although it is difficult to accurately project any substantial differences in local economics between the two alternatives.</p> <p>Specifically, improvement and expansion of existing recreation facilities, as proposed in Alternative B, would generate additional funds from parking fees, group picnic reservation fees, and special event fees.</p> <p>Based on the expansion of the Montour WMA boundary and the habitat improvement proposals in Alternative B, it could be expected that consumptive recreation opportunities would increase in the WMA. Because the site is managed by IDFG, which receives funds provided by the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and tags as well as excise taxes collected from hunting and fishing equipment, additional use would likely generate some additional funds associated with these consumptive recreation activities.</p> <p>There is one agricultural lease and two grazing/agricultural leases on lands within Montour WMA. Agricultural leases could be expanded for planting of more ear corn, but if the three remaining leases were to be discontinued, there could be a minor adverse impact to the leaseholders who would lose lands used to produce income.</p>



**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Environmental Justice	<p>Statistics have not been compiled on the race or ethnicity of users of Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA. It would be logical to assume that the users reflect the makeup of the population of Gem County and nearby Ada (which includes the Boise metropolitan area), Canyon, and Payette counties. Implementation of either of the two alternatives would have no effect to environmental justice concerns. Under either alternative, the campground at Montour Campground and parking access at Black Canyon Park would continue to assess nominal user fees set by Reclamation to offset maintenance costs. Additionally, current reservation fees would still be required for the gazebo or picnic shelter at Wild Rose Park, two group picnic shelters at Black Canyon Park, and a group camping area at Triangle Park. The remainder of recreation facilities at Black Canyon would be free. Triangle Park has been designated for special events in Alternative B and could likely assess fees for future events as well. In either alternative, Reclamation would continue to seek a non-federal public entity managing partner to operate all recreation facilities. If a managing partner is found, it is possible that they could assess nominal fees for use of areas that are currently free or increase fees at those locations that currently assess them. While no minority group would be disproportionately affected, in general, lower income families or individuals would be affected by fees to a greater extent than middle or upper income groups.</p>	Same as Alternative A.

**TABLE 2.4-1**  
Summary of Impacts

Resource Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)—Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Enhancement of Natural and Cultural Resource Values and Maintenance of Recreational Opportunities
Cultural Resources	Identification, protection, and management of cultural resources would continue to occur on a project-specific basis, in response to individual Reclamation-initiated or Reclamation sponsored undertakings that pose a threat to cultural resources. The cultural resources management mode would continue to be predominantly one of reacting, instead of proactively initiating protection from within the cultural resources program itself. Significant cultural sites would be protected because of legal requirements to do so, not through any agency initiative or preference.	Reclamation legally must take into account the effects of its actions upon cultural properties under Alternative A and B. However, Alternative B provides greater opportunity for proactive cultural resource management through increased public awareness and historic designations, not provided under Alternative A. Alternative B does not rely on reactions to Reclamation undertakings to trigger protection of cultural resources. Because actions prescribed under Alternative B are more focused, developed, and tend to confine activities to smaller areas, Alternative B would be more beneficial to cultural resources than Alternative A. Recognizing the old Montour town site as an historic district and eventually nominating it to the National Register would provide the historic district with a legal measure of protection. Although increased access tends to increase abuse of cultural resources, creating areas of focused interpretation and public awareness in the Montour Valley will increase respect and stewardship for these resources and the need to protect them, at the same time confining visitors to controlled spaces, decreasing opportunities for relic collection and vandalism.
Indian Sacred Sites	If sacred sites are located in the area of potential effect of a Reclamation project, their integrity is compromised by actual physical disturbances as well as visual or auditory intrusions resulting in changes in character, feeling, and association of the site. In such cases, their “sacredness” and importance as a religious or sacred site is diminished. As with cultural resources, sacred sites are compromised by vandalism and relic collecting, by land use activities, and recreation and other development.	This alternative is essentially the same as Alternative A. However, because of more focused, controlled, and formalized land use activities, potential impacts to sacred sites under Alternative B would be less than for Alternative A.
Indian Trust Assets	Specific treaty rights for hunting and fishing in this area are not universally understood or accepted. Existing management at Montour WMA would continue, and would affect wildlife and fish as described in the Wildlife and Aquatics sections. There are no direct impacts to the right to hunt, fish, or gather under Alternative A.	There are no direct impacts to the right to hunt, fish, or gather under Alternative B.